



**TESTIMONY OF
DEBORAH K. WEYMOUTH, FACHE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEALTH NETWORK
SUBMITTED TO THE
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 21, 2023**

**HB 6620, An Act Promoting Competition In Contracts Between Health
Carriers And Health Care Providers
SB 983, An Act Limiting Anticompetitive Health Care Practices**

Good afternoon. My name is **Deborah Weymouth**, and I am Chief Executive Officer at Manchester Memorial Hospital. I am here to testify in opposition to **HB 6620, An Act Promoting Competition In Contracts Between Health Carriers And Health Care Providers** and **SB 983, An Act Limiting Anticompetitive Health Care Practices**.

ROCKVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL LOCATED AT 31 UNION STREET, VERNON, CT 06066.

HB 6620 and sections 1 and 2 of SB 983 ban certain contract clauses in commercial contracts.

Section 3 of SB 983 limits out-of-network commercial payer reimbursement for hospital services to 100% of Medicare.

In every discussion about making improvements to healthcare delivery and payment the issue of transparency is an integral part of the conversation. With respect to HB 6620 and sections 1 and 2 of SB 983 more transparency is needed in the provisions related to the “anti-tiering” provisions.

If the Committee takes action on these bills **ROCKVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL** requests the Committee add language that: (1) requires payers to be transparent with the standards that they adopt when slotting providers into tiers; (2) requires payers to notify providers of those changes 90 days prior to the changes being made, (3) requires payers to establish a process by which providers are able to contest the tiering decisions made by payers, and (4) requires the Department of Insurance to regularly audit payer compliance with those tiering standards and processes.

In addition, **ROCKVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL** requests the Committee add language to this bill to protect hospitals from health carriers’ unilateral changes in

contracts provisions by policy. Health carriers should not be able to unilaterally change terms of a contract by policy.

Regarding Section 3 of SB 983, it is a solution in search of a problem. In 2015, the Connecticut General Assembly took action to limit the medical bills fully-insured patients were receiving due to out-of-network care. In 2022, the federal No Surprises Act accomplished the same for patients enrolled in self-funded plans. SB 983 would upend an issue that Connecticut and the federal government have already successfully addressed.

Unfortunately, the seeming intent of SB 983 is to favor national health insurance companies over Connecticut's community hospitals in commercial contract negotiations.

The consequences of the out-of-network price cap in SB 983 would be financially devastating to **ROCKVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL**. **Were such a cap in place, and in-network rates pushed closer to Medicare payment rates, our organization would lose millions in reimbursement.** This loss of commercial revenue would be in addition to the millions in unreimbursed Medicare and Medicaid costs our organization absorbs each year.

The math doesn't work.

We cannot sustain the robust healthcare delivery system that our patients enjoy if we cannot cover our costs and are in the red on every line of business – commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid. The legislation would also make us less prepared to respond to another pandemic, a response that for the last three years has been dominated by a reliance on Connecticut's hospital and health systems.

This legislation is an unfortunate departure from the spirit of collaboration and cooperation that has been the hallmark of statewide discussions on how to address healthcare affordability. We support the cost growth benchmark as a means to examine and address cost growth across multiple sectors of the healthcare system. It was only last year that the legislature codified the benchmark and this will be the first year of publicly reported data—we should let that process work.

The out-of-network price caps would devastate our hospital and they should be opposed.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

For additional information, contact **Sheryl DeCilio** at **sdecilio@echn.org**.